



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

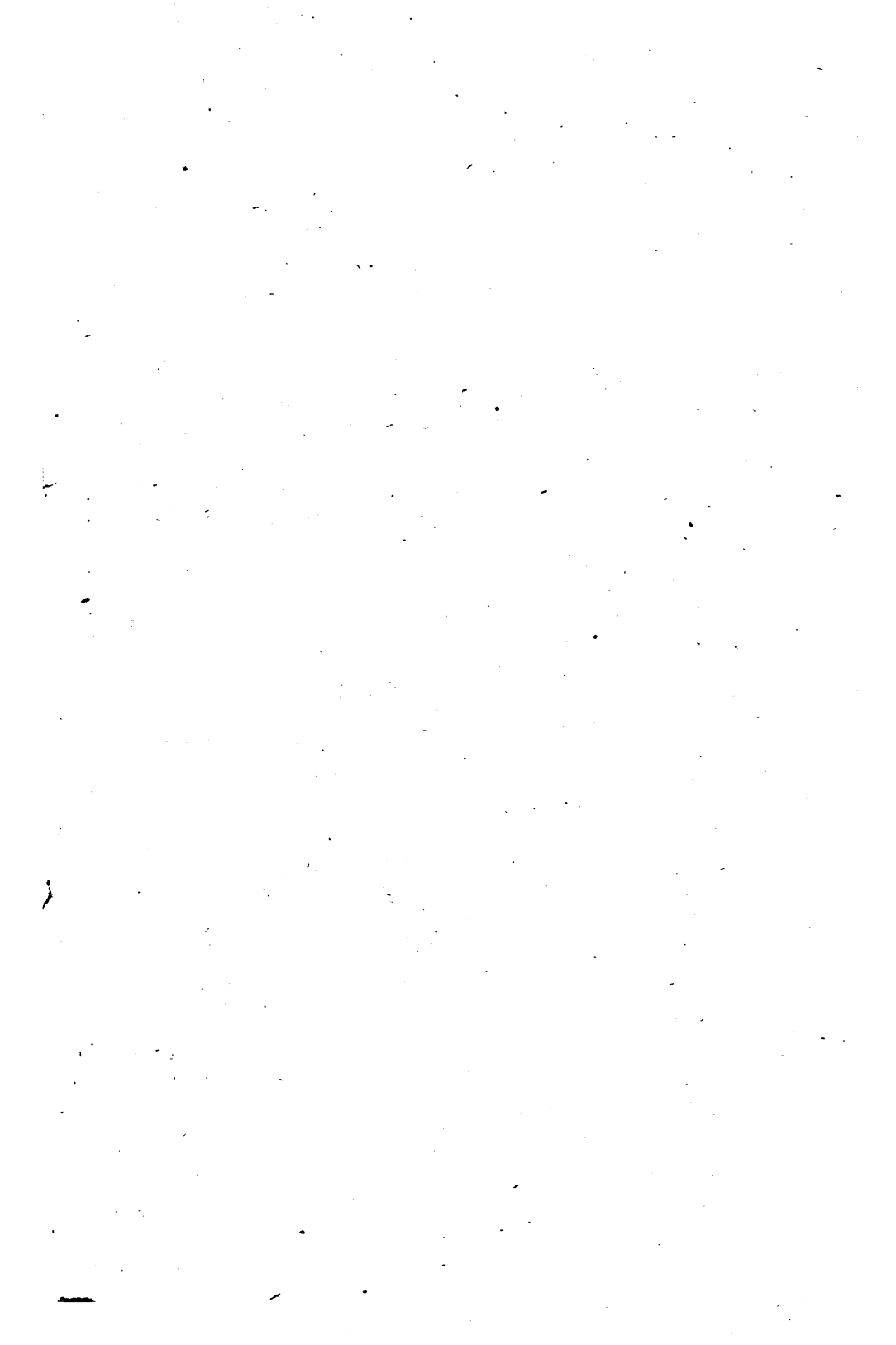
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

US 1490 6.17.5

Bd Feb. 1871







THESE THREE.

A SERMON

PREACHED AT WOODBURY, CONN.,

ON OCCASION OF ITS

BI-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION,

JULY 5, 1859.

BY THE

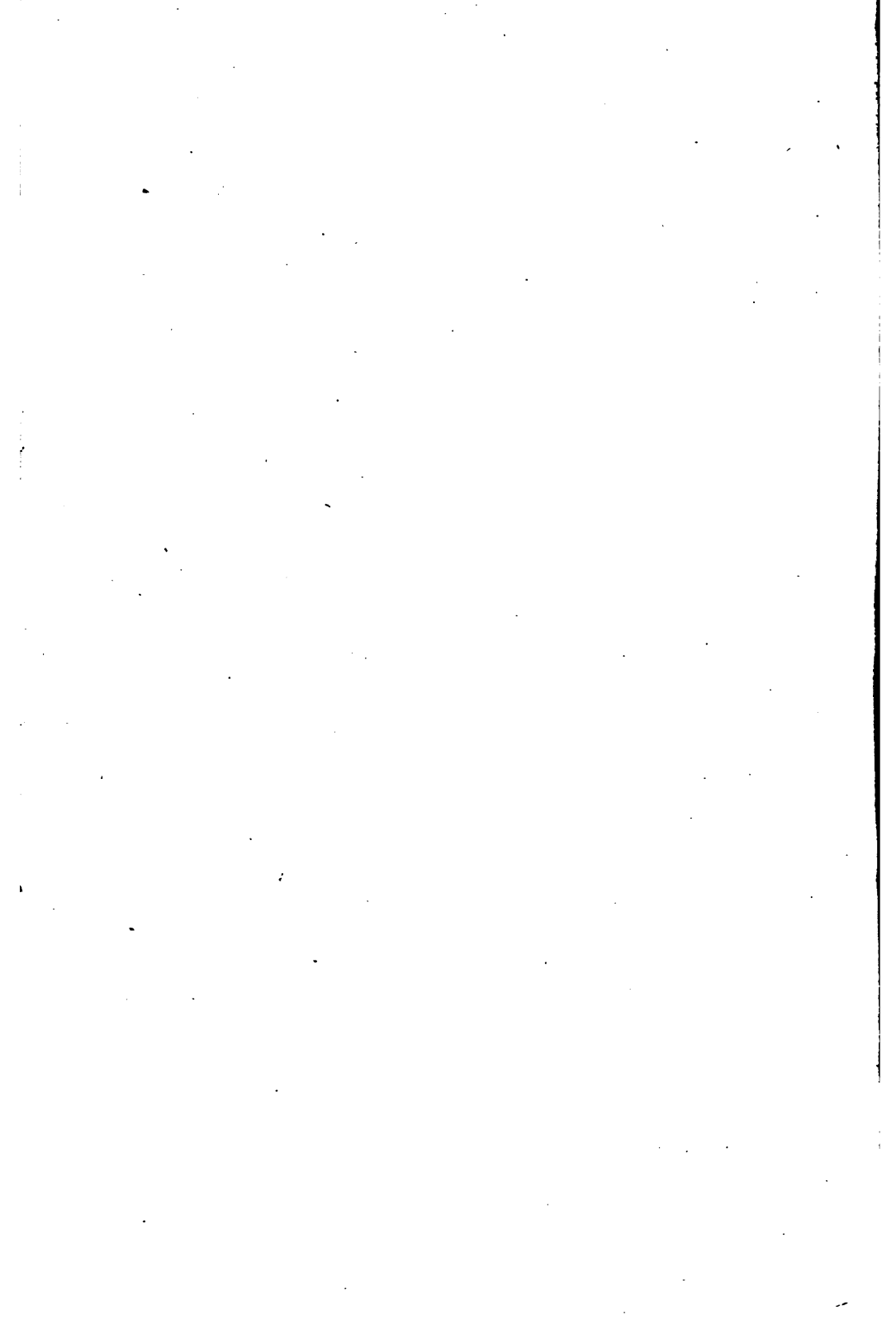
REV. HENRY BEERS SHERMAN, M. A.,

RECTOR OF CHRIST CHURCH, BELLEVILLE, N. J.

NEWARK, N. J.:

PRINTED AT THE DAILY ADVERTISER OFFICE.

1859.



THESE THREE.

A SERMON

PREACHED AT WOODBURY, CONN.,

ON OCCASION OF ITS

BI-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION,

JULY 5, 1859.

BY THE

REV. HENRY BEERS SHERMAN, M. A.,

RECTOR OF CHRIST CHURCH, BELLEVILLE, N. J.

NEWARK, N. J.:

PRINTED AT THE DAILY ADVERTISER OFFICE.

1859.

22 1/2 11

US 14906.17.5

1868, Jan. 3.

Dear Sir:

I am very sorry

to hear of your

(illness)

TO

THE MEMORY OF

THE REVEREND ZECHARIAH WALKER,

THE FIRST MINISTER OF

ANCIENT WOODBURY;

This Sermon,

PREACHED ON OCCASION OF THE BI-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

OF THE TOWN,

BY HIS DESCENDANT IN THE SEVENTH GENERATION,

IS REVERENTLY INSCRIBED.

COLLECTS.

Almighty and everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope and charity; and that we may obtain that which thou dost promise, make us to love that which thou dost command; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth; send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee. Grant this for thine only son Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

S E R M O N .

“Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three ; but the greatest of these is charity.”—1 Cor. xiii: 13.

Now—that is, in our present state as a probation—in this world and upon the life we are living in it, these three abide as the constituent elements of its substantial portion. In the work of our salvation, as the central business which employs and occupies us here, each, as an attribute of our forming character, holds its assigned position in a fixed relation

Now—in this present state of our existence as preparatory for the future, (and in regard of the first two, as will be shown, now *strictly and exclusively*,) “abideth faith, hope, charity, these three”—each and all of them—jointly and severally, together and distinctly.

1. FAITH—in which the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, moves upon the abyss of our fallen nature, and begets us again unto a lively hope in Jesus Christ; and through which, in its operation by love under that ministration of the Spirit of God which the mediation of the Son procures to bring us to the Father, we are justified and regenerated, renewed and sanctified

2. HOPE—by which we are incited to rise above the adversities and trials of this present world, and to look beyond it for the soul's true home. And

3. CHARITY—by which faith and hope are inclined to a heavenly direction, and all the gifts and graces of the Divine life shaped and consolidated and made holy in the sight of God.

4. THE GREATEST OF THESE IS CHARITY—because, in distinction from the other two, it is an attribute of God, and constitutes in man assimilation to his Maker—the renewal of that divine image and likeness in which he was created.

It is foreign to our present purpose, under the straitened conditions of our space precluding it, to enter at large into the definition and description of FAITH. The term is variously employed in Scripture, and is expressive of a great variety of meanings. It must suffice, in the present connection, that we follow the distinctive lines of the passage under review, and confine our survey to the specific indications which it furnishes.

1. NOW ABIDETH FAITH.

As employed by the Apostle in our text, and in the chapter which includes it, FAITH is the causative or actuating principle by which all our hopes and desires, all our purposes and endeavors, and even our belief, are made effectual. We say *belief*, because there is a distinction with a difference, between intellectual assent to the system of Divine Truth, and that justifying FAITH, which, laying hold upon the hope set before us in the Deliverer, and resting in the promises of God, brings the whole man under a divine dominion and into captivity to the obedience of Christ; and which, in its working by LOVE, demonstrates the great problem of our souls' salvation. As it "now abideth," FAITH is the provisional agency or means through which the restoration of fallen man to the favor of God is potentially effected. Though it is the condition of our justification—and the *indispensable* condition, in that it allies us to the Lord that bought us—still it is a *part* and not the *whole* of "our high calling of God in Christ Jesus." It is a means to the production of Christ *in* us, "the end of the law for righteousness."

It serves the important purpose of introducing us within the circle of divine grace; leads us to an apprehension of the hope of eternal life set before us in Christ Jesus; brings us within reach of the promised salvation which grace provides, and nerves the soul to lay hold upon and appropriate it. Both in its nature and in its function, FAITH is inferior and subordinate to CHARITY. As an instrumentality it brings us to the law of our filial duty, while charity embraces it—for "LOVE is the fulfilling of the law." The simple exercise of FAITH brings us to Christ: The operation of LOVE makes us *like* Christ, conforming us unto His image in

righteousness and true holiness. Thus *with* CHARITY abideth FAITH: but greater than faith is charity.

Let us not be understood in this connection, as seeking or desiring in anywise to lower the due estimate of FAITH: we are far enough from that. We acknowledge and accredit it, as the initial doctrine in the scheme of divine grace—the condition upon which our justification before God depends and hinges. “Without faith it is impossible to please Him.” It is only through faith in the atonement effected by Christ, that we can look for any lasting benefit to accrue to us from His mediation.

We are, indeed, (as the Apostle says, and repeats,) “*saved by grace.*” But that “grace of God which bringeth salvation” can only reach us “*through faith*” It is the appointed medium—the way and means through which we fall in with the gracious plan of God concerning us, and work out our own salvation.

“Now abideth faith”—*now*, as the prime essential of our Christian state. Without it, human hope is but a wayward and delusive fancy; and human righteousness, even the highest grade of it, is but an empty show—a form without the substance—a body without the soul. Therefore, (that is, growing out of the necessity of the case,) “now abideth faith:” and every thought and action of our life—every purpose and endeavor which enters into the account of what we are, must proceed and spring from FAITH, or they pass into the portion of “dead works.” It is only as the quickening principle of FAITH pervades and hallows what we do, that our service becomes acceptable in the Divine sight, and thus wins for us the Divine favor. “Without faith it is impossible to please God.”

But, (for “the end of the commandment is CHARITY,”) if we propose FAITH to ourselves as an end which we are to attain and stop at, we grossly mistake both its nature and its office. It is but the means through which our salvation by grace is to be wrought out. And we should always consider it only as a means—the end which it subserves being eternal life, in which FAITH will have no part nor lot. Although, as our text affirms of it, “FAITH abideth *now*,” conjoined with CHARITY and operating by it what is holy and acceptable, yet, as all that is heavenly in its

nature is comprehended and included in that "greatest of these," which under the term "LOVE" is defined by St. Paul as "the fulfilling of the law," the truth of the affirmation in our text is made apparent: and while now abideth faith *with* charity, greater than faith is charity.

Let us pass to consider the second feature in the Apostle's statement.

2. "NOW ABIDETH HOPE."

What we have shown in demonstration of FAITH as inferior to CHARITY, is applicable alike to HOPE. It "abideth now," as part of that law which as a school-master brings us to Christ. It is the great incentive to exertion in the work of our salvation. It is an important element in the entire texture of our present character; and is interwoven as a golden thread with the whole essence of our moral being. It enters into the very substance of our fearfully mysterious life; and operates upon the whole surface of that twofold relationship in which we stand, as connected with this world, and looking on to connection with another. It makes us what we are, and unfolds to us what we shall be. Whether in things earthly and temporal, or in things heavenly and eternal, HOPE is the quickening principle which nerves to energy the heart of man, and leads him forward amidst fear and doubt to tread with a firm step the ascending path of life.

"Now abideth hope." It is the soul's youthful impulse, by which we are cheered and comforted in the vicissitudes and adversities of our present lot; and through which, as seeking a more enduring substance than it yields, we receive accessions of courage and of strength, enabling us to grasp the realities of an immortal portion, and to "press forward toward the mark for the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

"*Now abideth hope.*" It is the light of human life, which else were cheerless to us. It fulfils a blessed ministry upon the present, whilst accomplishing its higher mission for the future. It comes to us like an envoy from the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in its wings and messages of joy upon its half-opened lips. In the exercise of its ministry as shaped to the circumstances of the fallen, and adapted to the conditions of a world

sitting in darkness and under the shadow of death, it tracks its path with light, and scatters blessings all along its course. Beautiful are its feet upon the mountains, bringing glad tidings of good. The lanes and valleys of life rejoice in its visitation, and the wilderness and the solitary place are glad for it. It comes to us in our days of darkness, which are many, and cheers us with the indications of a bright to-morrow. It finds the sky of life with clouds upon it, and tinges them with radiant hues; and even when the storm is dark, bursts through its gloom, and spans the firmament with its bow of promise. It finds us sinking, and arrests us ere we fall. It finds us cast down, and stretches out its hand to raise us. Never, but at our bidding word, does it leave us or forsake us. It keeps back the invading pressure of terrible Despair; and when the scenery of life which surrounds our present experience is barren of all comfort, and the heart grows sick, it beckons us away to the green pastures where the still waters which reflect them are radiant with the smiles of God. With unfaltering accents it tells us ever of a better portion; and even when the earthly dependence fails us in our time of need, opens new sources of enjoyment with its revealing power—still tells us that the world has pleasant places, and that “it is good for us to be here.” It transfigures the chequered aspects of our life, and makes them one with its own radiant self. Like the Only-begotten who begat it, it seeks the welfare of mankind, and *goes about doing good*. It comes to us when the heart is sick and ready to faint, and enlivens us with friendly words. It invests the spirit of heaviness with the garments of praise. It lifts up the hands that hang down and the feeble knees; and when joy comes not with the morning but heaviness still endures, it “giveth songs in the night.” It transforms itself into Expectation, and inspires us with fresh trust to quietly wait. It invades the domain of disappointment and the chill recesses of deep grief, and peoples them with glad sounds and happy sights. It makes the parched ground to become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water. The crooked ways of life are made straight before it, and its rough ways smooth. It “goeth forth to its work” with man, and its voice is to the sons of men.

It solaces and consoles us, when it cannot incite and cheer. Remembering our frame, it adapts the exercises of its mission to what we are, and whispers "a word in season to him that is weary." It speaks with soothing tones to the ill-fortuned and forsaken brother, shipwrecked and broken hearted in his voyage of life, and encourages him amid "the waves of this troublesome world," to tempt the adventurous way once more. It renews the face of things, and transmutes to a seeming preciousness the crude rough elements it touches. Oh, it has a charmer's power. There is a wilderness before it, and a garden of Eden behind: before it is despair, lamentation, and woe: behind is the renewal of joy, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody. NOW ABIDETH HOPE. Well for our present happiness it should: well for our immortal yearnings that it doth. It is the light that halloweth with blessedness our present lot; and when abiding in companionship with FAITH, it guides us to that higher happiness we long for, but which we find not here. NOW ABIDETH FAITH AND HOPE. They walk together, and proceed upon their path hand in hand. Hope leans on faith, and faith on hope—each imparting to the other, as they advance, increase of energy—giving and taking strength reciprocal, and enabling us under their united ministry to maintain our lot in time, and to work out for eternity our souls' salvation. NOW ABIDETH FAITH WITH HOPE

But, although they enter thus into the present composition of human character, moulding and shaping it in its various conformations, their existent relationship is restrictive and peculiar and limited to the present. For it is only now—in this state as a probation, that these two, "faith and hope abide." Their nature and their office are temporary and transient. They are as commissioned servants; and "the servant abideth not in the house forever." Both have their limits, and to each is its allotted period. As FAITH will have at length fulfilled its mission and become merged in knowledge, so HOPE will become absorbed in fruition, and lose itself in the blessedness of experience—even as the Apostle says: "Hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, no longer doth he hope for." Both, as we have intimated, are only *temporary*, as means to an end; and when they shall have served their purpose, each will cease. In the termi-

nation of His mediatorial work, "the AUTHOR of our faith" will be its "FINISHER," and the Inspirer of our hope that "fulness of joy," toward which it verged and tended. Now they abide, but only in this life.

Strictly speaking, there will be neither faith nor hope in that spiritual condition, which, as the eternal portion of the saved and sealed in Christ, is prepared for them in heaven. As the twilight melts and loses itself in the absorbing and exceeding glory of the day on which it neighbors and which it serves to introduce, so faith and hope will be finally absorbed in the effulgence of Divine love, and lose their finite identity in the infinitude of "His fullness who filleth all in all." "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

Thus much as to what is *transient* and *inferior* in the Apostle's statement. Let us pass now to consider what is *permanent* and *pre-eminent* in his declaration.

3. "NOW ABIDETH CHARITY."

CHARITY, which abideth in this world with FAITH and HOPE, enabling them to fulfil their appointed work, ceases not with the termination of their office; but reaching onward into the world to come, abideth there forever. It is "the greatest of these three," both in its *office* and in its *nature*.

Its asserted superiority is apparent, in the first place, from the fact of its *duration*: for "charity never faileth." While faith and hope abide now and only now, CHARITY abideth both now and forever. It has a twofold relation. It is allied to our present state, and connected with the permanency of the heavenly world. "The greatest of these is charity."

Its asserted pre-eminence over faith and hope is apparent, in the second place, from the fact that in its nature it embraces and includes all that is of spiritual essence in both.

In a preceding verse the Apostle affirms, "Charity *believeth* all things." There is FAITH. He adds, "Charity *hopeth* all things." There is HOPE. The exercise of each, you perceive, is assigned to CHARITY, as included among its attributes—the attributes of its present character—or, more strictly speaking, the preliminary accompaniments of its indwelling presence.

Let us examine now with a little more of definiteness, the *nature* of this lasting and pre-eminent grace, as distinctively "the greatest of these three." Wherein does its superior magnitude consist? and what is the substantial basis of its distinction?

4. "THE GREATEST OF THESE IS CHARITY"

CHARITY (as every intelligent reader of the New Testament must understand) is but another name for LOVE. It is accordingly one of the attributes of Deity—nay, we might rather say, *the engrossing attribute*: "for God is love; and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God." In the abiding of charity, therefore, "the tabernacle of God is with men;" and the indwelling of LOVE is the indwelling of God. "Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us."

It is LOVE which recreates us in the heavenly image, transforms us into the Divine likeness, and moulds us into meetness for an inheritance among the holy. It is the beginner and sustainer of spiritual vitality in man. It is, to our heavenly citizenship, that surrounding atmosphere, which the soul, by the affixed conditions of its renewed life, breathes ever when it lives to God. It is placed by the Apostle in a position of leadership when enumerating "the fruits of the Spirit," because it is "the greatest." It controls the motion of the rest, and holds them in subjection to its imperial sway. It is "the very bond of peace and of all virtues." Without infringement of their identity, but as the greater includes the less, it embraces and comprehends both faith and hope. For "now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three," distinctly and together, severally and jointly.

We must "believe all things;" and we must "hope all things;" and in the strength of that indwelling presence of love whereby they work, we must do all things which the Gospel enjoins as well pleasing in the sight of God. We must "walk by faith;" because faith is led on by love, and is "the substance of things hoped for." We must lean unto hope; because "hope is the anchor of the soul," upon which faith depends; and we must yield ourselves to charity, because "love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God." In the broad, full sense in which it is defined and described in the chapter to which our text belongs, we must accord to "that most excellent grace"

the dominion which it claims, and obey the motions of its will : for "the end of the commandment is charity." We must open our hearts to its gracious influence, that it may enter and abide in us. Thus every Christian principle will be ripened into mature development and harmonious action ; all "the fruits of the Spirit," every heavenly grace and virtue, and whatever is requisite to that crowning result which draws to itself our desires and endeavors, "*that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works,*" will be cultivated and live and grow in us, subduing unto itself the indigenous produce of our depraved nature, and covering the surfaces of our life with what is true and honest, what is just and pure, what is lovely and of good report.

"Now abideth charity"—*now*, emphatically. Its home is in the heavenly places, in the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens:" but for the accomplishment of its mission upon earth, it dwells amongst us, and its tabernacle is with men.

NOW ABIDETH CHARITY. Let us not lose sight of this central aspect of our subject. Let us remember that *Love*, which is the element of our enjoyment in the future world, hath its commencement first, and to a measurable extent, growth and progression *here*. It enters into the texture of what we are, as the index to what we shall be. Through the agency of faith that worketh by it, having made us the children of God, it ministers to our growth in grace and our procession from strength to strength, renewing us in His image from glory to glory, and advancing us toward that perfection of Divine manhood, "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

It is the sign and mark in man of Divine life ; and holds a position of pre-eminence, as the central attribute of our present Christian character, around which, as stars around the source of light, all other gifts and graces of the spiritual life revolve. Dark in themselves, like those lesser lights which deck the material firmament, they shine in their several orbits and make life beautiful, only as Love shines upon them, and as they move in mutual harmony obedient to its supreme control. In divorcement from their subordination to the greater light, and beyond the radiant

circle of its attraction, they are shorn of their reflected glory and pass back into the portion of darkness.

Even FAITH, leaning unto itself, degenerates to superstition, bows to a base servitude, and becomes the minister of sin, "working all uncleanness with greediness." It only operates with an upward tendency, and "adorns the doctrine of God," when it goes forth to its work with charity and becomes "faith that worketh by love."

Nay, even HOPE, in its independent action, dis severed from FAITH and unconstrained by LOVE—like that Son of the morning, who spurned the conditions of his dependent being, and ventured upon the ambitious desire "to have life in himself," and who, from his high place among the children of light, was "brought down to the sides of the pit," and quenched his brightness in "the blackness of darkness forever"—even HOPE, left to itself, reverses the motion of its aspiration to a grovelling preference, and goes on to recklessness under the impulse of its own desires. It only fulfils its office as the light of life and brightener of our being, when it clings to faith and abideth in a living connection with charity. It loses the peerless glory which invests it, when it wanders from its dependent sphere, and "the light that is in it becomes darkness" and a bewildering shadow, "deceiving and being deceived." It is "the anchor of the soul," sure and steadfast when it clings to the Rock of Ages, and imbeds itself in those promises of God which are YEA and AMEN in Christ. But, loosing itself from the constraint of LOVE, and relaxing its hold upon the one Object of FAITH, it mocks the anxious eye of the voyager, and "the earnest expectation of the creature," which it draws to itself in the manifestation of a great deliverance, and sinks as lead in the mighty waters.

"Now," therefore, as of moral necessity, it must—now, as of spiritual necessity, it does—"ABIDETH CHARITY." Without it, all other gifts and graces are vain and nothing worth, and stand in the religious account only as dross and tin.

This is a most important consideration; and there grows out of it a wholesome lesson for the present time to learn.

What we need for a harmonious religious development, is less

talk and more action—less ritualism and more earnestness—less “church” and more Gospel—less theology and more LOVE. The prevalent faith of the age, unsettled, wavering, desultory and distracted, is *as it is*, because its reigning spirit has ejected charity. And the only adequate remedy for the existing religious ailment—the only remedy, which, penetrating beyond the superficial symptoms of its aspect, can reach to the inner source of the disease, and restore blooming health and warm-gushing life to the disordered system, is an infusion of that heavenly element of CHARITY which it so sadly lacks. The life of God in the soul of man depends, both for its energies and for its being, upon this supply. It can never thrive upon the dry husks of abstract orthodoxy and theological refinement and religious emotion and ecclesiastical conceit, which have been for long its allotted rations: It must have its meat in due season out of the fulness of God. And that fulness is CHARITY: For “God is LOVE.” Without this, it becomes weak and sick. Without this, it must pine and die.

The practical application which attaches itself to this feature of the subject, has cropped out here and there already in our passing review, and for the most part is apparent to observation. For the remainder, as lying now upon the surface with the conclusion of the whole matter, it suggests itself at once; and the lesson which it teaches is direct and plain. We gather it in a brief survey of that aspect of our text which exhibits “faith, hope, charity, these three” as abiding now *conjunctively*. For thus dwelling together in the bond of a mutual relation and operating their effects in a confluent action, they exemplify an obtaining principle which underlies all other gifts and graces of the Divine life, and upon which the effectual working of each depends. It is in this living coördinate union of the several parts of the religious system, and in their conjunctive action, that the great secret of spiritual growth is bound up. Both the individual believer and the church which is His body, “grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ,” in proportion as their religious history is an exemplification of this fact and an illustration of this principle.

By the same Apostle who hints it in our text, the whole matter

is elsewhere distinctly stated, as entering into the conditions of our growth in grace and in the knowledge of God, till we come unto the measure of the stature of **THE PERFECT MAN**:—"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in LOVE."

This, then, let us remember, and remember again: for we are likely to forget it. In discussing religious matters and defining Christian doctrines, we naturally fall into the scholastic lines; and in the adoption of a peculiar dialect, we are very apt to make use of terms and distinctions which serve to disintegrate and exhibit *apart* what the Revelation of Divine Truth clearly presents in a systematic combination and united shape. Under such a regimen theologies have grown and thriven: but Christianity itself has been dwarfed and starved. Divisions in the system of Christian *doctrine* produce and perpetuate divisions in "the household of faith."

In times when LOVE has waxed cold, and as a consequence upon this, dissensions abound, many, warmed with dogmatic zeal and theological conceit, run up and down and to and fro in quest of orthodoxy. And the zeal of the house eats it up. In an engrossing predilection for *certain parts* of the Christian system, whether catholic or peculiar, the remainder of "the faith once delivered to the saints" is practically discarded and ignored; and in this overmuch attachment to certain *features* of the faith or certain *notions* of the Gospel, the *entireness* of "the truth as it is in Jesus," which is the Gospel *itself*, is "passed by on the other side." The unity of the faith is set at nought, and charity seeks in vain for that in which it rejoiceth. The bond of peace is broken, and controversy comes in 'with his rough voice and unmeek aspect,' and divides the Christian household into rival sections and distinctive classes. Each selects, as the all-in-all for importance, some favorite and peculiar doctrine; invests it, as the theological pet, "with a coat of many colors;" makes a catchword even of its name; and enshrining it in a peculiar dialect, rejoices in that, as the shibboleth of Christianity.

To counterwork this prevalent tendency, which, in a polemical and faithless age, many have realized and more are realizing to their spiritual damage and Christian loss, let us cease from Religionism and cleave to what is of Faith: Let us turn aside from "vain jangling," and "follow after charity which is the bond of perfectness"—in which, as it "now abideth," all that is true and essential and important in opinion and doctrine and practice meets and centres and abides. Under the dominion of LOVE, "the foundation of our faith standeth sure," and the impulses of our hope point in the heavenly direction. The exercises of LOVE constitute a basis of unity in the bond of peace, which is always safe to rest upon; and if we prefer one gift or grace above the others, remembering that "LOVE is of God," let it be always CHARITY, because it is Divine, the greatest and the best. We shall thus be established upon *the Gospel* as a platform; cut loose from an overweening attachment to particular *members* of the body, and fall back upon the body of Christianity ITSELF.

In giving free course to the exercises of this greatest grace, this spirit of the Gospel and of its Author, we shall learn to look rather upon the full face of Christianity as presented in the Bible, than upon its shifting profile as exhibited in the schools; to sink those minor questions which are not essential to religion, and which a healthful and vigorous action of the Christian life absorbs into itself; to think neither of Paul nor of Apollos, but of THE GOSPEL, which one may have planted and the other watered, but of which only God pours into the heart where love abides and upon the life in which charity abounds, the blessed increase.

While, on the one hand, we see *faith* unduly magnified and the graces and virtues of a holy life, and "the doctrine which is according to godliness," thrust comparatively into the background—as if the body were all eye—or while, on the other hand, we hear the necessity of *good works* enforced, without a corresponding emphasis upon the indispensableness of *faith*—as if the body were all ear—let us side neither to the one nor to the other. In a separate view each is wide of the mark, and disjunctively both are wrong. They are the two scholastic extremes of the time; and, like the poles of the earth, *always cold*.

Let us turn away from each, to those tropical regions of the Gospel which are sunned by the genial influences of the Light of Light, and rest upon CHARITY, in which the two jarring notes of the age are melted and mingled and flow together in harmony; in which faith is the abiding principle and a life that is according to godliness the standing evidence of a state of grace; and without which, in their joint abiding, under the sway of charity, all religious profession is as sounding brass, and all seeming righteousness but a fond conceit and an empty show.

Finally, if we understand the nature of CHARITY; if we appreciate its excellence, and admit the asserted fact of its practical abiding now, we cannot regard with passive indifference, nor in any way apologize for those reigning divisions and dissensions which scar the present religious aspect and so sadly retard the progress of the Redeemer's kingdom.

Christianity, let us remember, is an abiding unity. There is one *Faith*, even as there is one *Lord*. And we know His will who is its Author, that all who profess it should be one. It is the manifest object of CHARITY as it abideth now, to consolidate the Christian elements and make us one. For this, it plies us with its gentle ministry, embracing every doctrine, receiving every truth, practising every virtue, and living and moving and rejoicing in the culture and growth and increase of every grace; adorning the doctrine of God the Saviour in all things; stamping the impress of its influence upon every separate act of life; infusing more and more of its heavenly spirit into ours; moulding into a Divine likeness the elements of human character to hallow it with loveliness; and fulfilling the remainder of its mission in "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

